

Hawthorn Park Community Primary

Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5QN

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders, including governors, have not been able to secure enough good teaching across the school since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress and outcomes are too low.
- School leaders do not ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress match the standard of work that pupils produce in their books.
- Leaders are not taking effective action to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school, and are falling further behind with their learning as a result. Sometimes, teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- In too many classes, particularly in key stage 2, teaching is poorly planned and pupils are not inspired to learn. Teachers fail to use their assessments of what pupils already know to provide work that helps them to make good progress.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not receive enough challenge in the work that teachers set. The proportions making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are well below those of similar pupils nationally.
- Although pupils study a wide range of subjects, the quality of work seen in books shows that too few pupils achieve well in the wider curriculum. Too many teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects such as science and geography.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have improved teaching in the early years so that it is now good. Children get off to a good start and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Improvements in key stage 1 are reflected in the 2016 test results, which were broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School leaders have ensured that there are good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils.
- School leaders have secured improvements to behaviour. Pupils are respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons and activities that challenge pupils
 - greater levels of challenge are provided for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
 - teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning
 - teachers provide feedback, in line with the school's marking policy, that helps pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making more regular checks on the quality of pupils' work to ensure that it matches the assessment information provided by teachers
 - ensuring that subject leaders are held fully to account for their role in securing improvements
 - providing pupils with a rich and broad curriculum
 - ensuring that governors are provided with the information they need to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for securing the necessary improvements.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - raising teachers' awareness of what pupils can achieve in subjects across the curriculum
 - providing more effective support for those pupils who are disadvantaged
 - improving the provision made for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving overall attendance by significantly reducing the number of pupils who miss school frequently
 - ensuring that all teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders, including governors, have not been able to secure enough good teaching to improve outcomes, particularly in key stage 2. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress and, by the end of Year 6, too many pupils are not prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders are continually facing difficulty in recruiting new teachers. As teachers have left the school, governors have often been unable to make new appointments. They have also been restricted in their options regarding temporary staff. This turbulence has left gaps in key areas that have weakened the leadership team, the quality of teaching and the overall achievement of many pupils.
- Leaders have not been effective in holding all members of staff to account for the quality of their work, or supporting them in making the necessary improvements. Leaders do not have a sufficiently accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning. This is because they do not ensure that the checks that they make on the quality of work in pupils' books match the assessment information that teachers provide.
- The additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is not being used effectively to improve outcomes. Too many of these pupils are persistently absent from school and, for these pupils in particular, gaps in their learning remain. The differences in the standards that they are achieving, compared with those of pupils nationally, are getting wider.
- Leaders have made some progress in improving teaching in the early years and key stage 1. These improvements are reflected in the 2016 end-of-key-stage results. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years increased, and the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average.
- Leaders have overseen improvements in behaviour. During this inspection, pupils were polite and courteous and keen to talk about their school. Staff and parents commented positively on the new behaviour systems and the way that pupils conduct themselves around school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress. Many of these pupils have poor attendance records and the additional support that is provided in class is too often focused on pupils' behaviour, rather than their learning.
- Pupils have the opportunity to study a range of subjects. For example, they learn how to use computers to write programs and develop an understanding of the importance of sequence and repetition. However, in subjects such as science and history, the standard of work is poor. Teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and rarely set work that challenges pupils, particularly the most able.

- The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement. Older pupils show a good understanding of how democracy works and the importance of the rule of law. Pupils on the school council understand the basic features of democracy, and enjoy representing the views of classmates in the regular meetings that take place. Although this helps pupils to develop an understanding of British values, they do not learn enough about different cultures, religions or beliefs. This limits pupils' understanding of tolerance, how society works and the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage.
- School leaders make good use of the additional physical education and sport premium funding. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to develop their skills in teaching lessons, such as in dance and gymnastics. The funding has also been used to widen the range of after-school clubs available and to enable more pupils to participate in inter-school sports.
- Parents and staff are supportive of the school's leadership team. Parents appreciate the good relationships which are established in the early years, and have confidence in the headteacher to make further improvements at the school. The vast majority of staff, who were at the school at the time of the previous inspection, said that they feel that the school has improved since then. They said that they feel well supported and that the headteacher has secured significant improvements to behaviour.
- The Jigsaw Centre works effectively with schools across the local authority to support pupils who are in danger of exclusion. It also provides education for a small number of pupils who have been permanently excluded, and works successfully with school leaders to reintegrate these pupils into different schools. Recent reductions in the number of fixed-term exclusions across the local authority indicate that the centre is having a positive impact on both behaviour and attendance.
- The support provided by the local authority has not been effective in helping school leaders to secure good progress and attainment. Too little attention has been given to the quality of work in pupils' books when reviewing standards across the school. Staff value the training opportunities that they access through local networks and the opportunities provided for collaborative work with other schools.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognise that there are weaknesses at the school and are working hard to support the headteacher in making the necessary improvements. They understand their role in challenging school leaders. However, they do not currently have access to a sufficiently wide range of evidence to evaluate the impact of leadership on teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have not ensured that there are effective links between pay and performance. The many enhancements to pay that have been approved over the past year do not reflect the weak practice that was seen during this inspection.
- Governors recognise that they require further support in developing their role in school improvement. A review of governance has recently been arranged in order help governors to better understand how to support and challenge school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors have ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures meet current requirements.
- The school makes rigorous checks on all adults who work at the school. Records are detailed and regularly monitored.
- The headteacher has ensured that there is a strong and effective focus on safeguarding matters. She ensures that all members of staff have appropriate training and regularly reviews the processes that the school uses, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The records that school leaders keep are detailed and show that the school works well with external agencies when necessary to protect and support children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school. There is some strong teaching but, in too many classes, teachers fail to take account of what pupils already know, and what they can already do, when planning their lessons. This means that teaching often fails to meet pupils' needs and does not help them to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently. Too many pupils consequently make inadequate progress.
- Although standards in writing, at the end of Year 6, were around the national average in 2016, much of the written work seen in pupils' books, during this inspection, was of poor quality. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Very little evidence was seen of teachers providing effective feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. In some topic books, many pieces of work were left unmarked, which shows that these teachers are not following the school's own marking policy.
- Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are reflected in improved attainment in reading at the end of the early years and Year 2. However, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge remain in some classes, and this is preventing further progress. Not enough is done to support the progress of pupils who struggle with early reading. As a result, the progress that pupils make across key stage 2 is significantly below that seen nationally.
- There have been some recent improvements to the teaching of mathematics. During this inspection, children in the early years were seen confidently working on number problems, showing a good understanding of numbers up to 20. In some key stage 1 classes, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and used good strategies to engage pupils in solving problems. However, the work seen in pupils' books shows that in key stage 2, teachers often set work that provides little challenge to pupils. Pupils are required to spend too much time completing work that they already understand. As a result, the progress that they make is limited.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable. Good records are kept and regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' achievement. However, the school's own records show that progress for these pupils is not as good

as it should be. The additional support that is provided by teaching assistants is not always focused on the specific needs of the pupil. Too often, it is used to manage behaviour, rather than learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils learn about British values through a range of activities including themed assemblies, involvement in charity events and participation in the school council. Pupils spoken to during this inspection were able to talk about the importance of democracy, freedom and having respect for those who hold different religious beliefs.
- The school runs a breakfast club. Pupils enjoy attending because it is caring and safe. Pupils who attend the club benefit from a wide range of activities and the opportunity to play with pupils of different ages.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils say that they feel safe while in school. During discussions, they demonstrated a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations. They understand how to be sensible when using modern technologies and how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils say that any issues with bullying are usually dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to secure improvements in behaviour. As a result, pupils generally behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- There is a clear link between the quality of teaching and the standard of behaviour in lessons. When teaching is effective, pupils readily engage and show good attitudes to learning. However, when teaching fails to provide challenge or interest to pupils, they often lose concentration, stop working and chat to their friends instead.
- Some teachers fail to follow the school's behaviour policy and some use the reward system inappropriately, which is both confusing for pupils and ineffective. For example, in one of the lessons seen, pupils entered the classroom talking quite noisily and taking a long time to settle. The teacher did not ask the class to quieten down and continued preparing for the lesson. Eventually, merits were given to three children for coming into the classroom quietly, each of whom seemed puzzled to have been rewarded.

- School leaders have had some success in improving attendance during this school year. However, the proportion of pupils that are frequently absent from school remains far too high, especially among disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The strategies used to monitor and improve attendance, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent, are not applied with enough rigour.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics across key stage 2. The school's performance has been below the government's floor standards at the end of key stage 2 for the past two years. The work seen in pupils' books, during this inspection, indicates that achievement at the end of key stage 2 is likely to be extremely low again in 2017.
- The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils judged to be working at greater depth in writing and in mathematics was also around the national average.
- From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in reading, writing or mathematics, across key stage 2, are consistently low. Although pupils make good progress in some year groups, there are too many classes in which teaching is weak and pupils' progress is limited.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well at Hawthorn Park. The proportions making or exceeding expected progress from their different starting points are well below those of other pupils nationally. In 2016, the standards achieved by these pupils in reading and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, were significantly below the national average.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make good progress across key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. Although many of the most able pupils read widely and often, they are not taught about the more complex aspects of reading. As a result, they fail to achieve the high standards that they are capable of reaching. In mathematics lessons, the most able pupils are not given enough opportunity to use and apply their knowledge and skills to investigate or solve problems.
- There have been some recent improvements to the teaching of phonics. By the end of Year 2, in 2016, the percentage of pupils who had passed the phonics check was around the national average, following re-sits. However, weaknesses remain and the Year 1 results were once again significantly below the national average in 2016. Those pupils who struggle with their early reading often fail to close the gaps in their learning. They make poor progress in key stage 2. The 2016 results at the end of key stage 2 in reading were significantly below the national average.

- There has been a recent focus on improving the teaching of mathematics. This has had a positive impact in some classes, particularly in the early years and in key stage 1, where results were above the national average in 2016. However, improvements have not been embedded across the school. The work seen in mathematics books showed that progress is too slow in too many classes. The results at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were significantly below the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Children learn well in the early years. Staff ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements, appropriate to this age group, are met. They make sure that children are kept safe and secure and encourage children to develop positive attitudes to learning. As a result, children enjoy attending school and make good progress.
- Strong leadership of the early years, over the past 12 months, has had a positive impact on the quality of provision. This was reflected in improved outcomes in 2016. Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was below the national average, it had improved considerably from previous years, and represented good progress for the majority of children, who started at the school with skills, knowledge and abilities that were well below those typically found.
- Parents appreciate the strong partnership that exists between home and school. Parents play a full part in the initial assessments that are made of children's abilities. Staff ensure that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Good procedures are also in place to ensure that there is a smooth transition from home to school. Parents are invited to bring their children into the school, on a weekly basis, during the term before they start. Staff also undertake home visits in order to establish children's level of development and find out about their interests. This information ensures that the initial assessments accurately reflect children's skills, knowledge and abilities.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the early years are good. Staff plan activities that capture children's interest and imagination so they are engaged in their learning and want to explore and learn more. Topics, role play and a wide range of resources are provided that appeal to all children. Evidence of progress, across all areas of learning, is recorded in children's 'learning journals'. The information is used to identify individual children's needs and to build on their particular interests and abilities.
- Staff recognise that further work is required to build on recent improvements and have appropriate plans in place to address areas that are not yet strong. For example, work is currently being carried out to improve access to the outdoor area, as some children have limited access to the outdoors and are currently not able to learn in this space throughout the day.
- The learning environment is well organised and attractive. Staff ensure that, as children settle into the nursery, they learn to take responsibility for looking after each other and the areas in which they work and play. The success of this caring, nurturing approach can be seen in the way that the youngest children, who are aged two at the time they start in the nursery, quickly settle and develop confidence and independence.

- Staff ensure that children have regular opportunities to take part in activities across all areas of learning. They make regular and accurate assessments of children’s progress, which are based on observations of children learning and interacting with each other during child-initiated play. They also assess how well children learn during sessions that are led by staff, such as during the regular phonics sessions that are held. These assessments are used well to plan activities that interest and challenge children.
- Effective actions are taken to support any child whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their progress is tracked closely and the school works with parents to arrange additional support, from both within school and, where necessary, through external agencies.

School details

Unique reference number	109524
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10023528

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Turner
Headteacher	Jeni Houghton
Telephone number	01582 863859
Website	www.hawthornparkcps.co.uk
Email address	admin@hawthornpark.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above that found nationally.
- The school manages a breakfast club.

- The Jigsaw Centre is located on the school site. It provides support for pupils across Central Bedfordshire who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium on its website.
- The school does not meet the current floor standards, which are the expected levels of performance at key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes.
- The lead inspector visited classrooms across the school with the headteacher on day one of the inspection and observed a lesson with the headteacher on day two.
- The lead inspector met with the head of service from the Jigsaw Centre. He also observed teaching in one class.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and scrutinised the work that they had completed in books.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning, and behaviour and safety.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with teachers who had management responsibility for mathematics, special educational needs and the early years.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its development plan and a range of other school policies. They also considered documentation relating to child protection, safeguarding, and behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They also met with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, through analysis of the 26 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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Mark Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Kissane	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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